[illegible, Dec. 31]

Rome Dec[r] 31[st] 1788

Dr Sir

I arrived at this place ten days ago, and should have written to you sooner; but when one arrives at Rome their desire to visit the Forum; to climb the seven hills; to see the tarpean rock & other things of which they formerly have read with pleasure, & in the same town with which they now find themselves, makes it impossible, until that desire is satisfied, to do or think of any thing else. I have not words which can express my admiration of Rome & every thing in it, indeed every thing seems like enchantment - I expected much, but it much surpasses what I had expected; & whenever I go I seem to be on fairy grounds: as yet I have seen but little of Rome but I have seen enough to persuade me that of all the places in this world it is the most agreeable & charming: it mortifies me exceedingly that I have but three months to devide between this place & naples where almost as many years might be passed agreeably & advantageously.

In my journey from Venice to this place I thought of you frequently, and entered into all your enthusiasm with respect to the cultivation of that precious tree the Olive. from Bologna to this place I pass'd through the finest orchard or orchards of them that ever I can possibly conceive.

Rutledge Junr

I or forty or fifty miles, imperiately after crossing the appenines. I did not see a corn or a wheat field nor any symptom of any other production saave the olive tree. yet I always has in view beautiful & flourishing villages. every thing was flourishing & abundant & the olive seem'd to spread fatness & plenty throughout the whole circumjacent Country. writing to my friends in Carolina I shall press very much the introduction of this tree. I am sure it will succeed there & think it questionable whether it would not much more northwardly. I intended giving you some account of my journey from Milan here but my friend Mr Short tells me he has anticipated me in a letter he wrote to you the last week. In a letter I had the pleasure of writing to you the day before I left Milan I requested of you to forward me any letters which might come addressed to your care to this place Poste restante. I beg that you will continue doing so for three three months to come as I shall remain here that time? before leaving Rome I shall again have the pleasure of writing to you, I pray God in the mean time, as I do at all times, to bless you with all sorts of honors & happiness & am my D.r Sir

Your sincere friend & very h.ble Serv.t

J. Rutledge junior

His Excellency
Tho.s Jefferson Esq.r